

Communication Matters

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A Resource for Students Who have Combined Vision & Hearing Loss

-Beth Kennedy, M.Ed., QAIII

Did you know that there are at least forty-seven students across that state of Michigan who have a combined vision and hearing loss (some with additional disabilities) who do not qualify for services through the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) DeafBlind Unit? These students have a hearing loss and a vision loss, but the vision impairment is not significant enough to qualify them for MCB services.

As you may know, Michigan Commission for the Blind guidelines require that an individual is legally blind (has an acuity loss of 20/200 or greater, and/or has a dramatic field loss, and/or a degenerative condition). There are children across the State who do not meet this criteria, who will seek services from MRS.

DB Central: Michigan Services for Children and Young Adults is a federally funded grant project that is designed to support families and professionals in meeting the needs of children and young adults who qualify as DeafBlind (as described below). DB Central staff members have worked hand in hand for years with the Michigan Commission for the Blind DeafBlind Unit to meet the post-secondary transition needs of young adults who are DeafBlind. More and more, we are seeing students registered for our census who do not qualify for MCB services. We want to insure that MRS staff are aware of DB Central and the services provided by the grant, as well as the criteria for qualification.

The criteria for a student to qualify for DB Central include: a vision loss of 20/70 or greater in the better eye with correction, and/or a significant field loss, and/or a degenerative condition. The hearing loss criteria are fairly inclusive, and allow us to serve anyone whose education is impacted by the loss and/or has a cochlear implant.

DB Central services include: on site educational consultation, family support, training, information dissemination, and census data collection. All services are provided free of charge through a federal grant awarded by the United States Department of Education. Anyone can refer a child/young adult to DB Central, though services cannot be initiated without a release form signed by the parent/guardian. For more detailed information on project services, call toll-free 1-888-758-0508 (V/TTY) to request and information packet or visit:

www.dbcentral.org.

We know that there are many more young adults across the state who fit into this category. If you know of someone who could use additional support, please contact DB Central.

Hearing Aid Tax Credit

HR 414 was introduced on January 26, 2005 and referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. This act would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids.

For more information go to:

thomas.loc.gov

Then enter in the search box:

HR 00414

SHHH Newsletter Online

The newsletter of Michigan Self Help for Hard of Hearing People is now posted on their web site. Read The MI-SHHH-IGANIAN at: www.mi-shhh.org

Information or news related to Deaf or Hard of Hearing services may be forwarded to Julie Eckhardt at jewel@chartermi.net.

Views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily the views of Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth-Rehabilitation Services. Communication Matters is available on the web at www.michigan.gov/mrs and on the E-Learn Deaf & Hard of Hearing Resource Center.

PET-D: Beyond the Basics

The “**Post-Employment Training Administration of Programs Serving Consumers who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing**” (PET-D) program provides leadership and administrative training to those who serve consumers who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing. PET-D training is provided through a two-step, 21-unit post-baccalaureate certificate in Rehabilitation Administration.

CURRICULUM

The first step of training consists of completing 9 units during a four-week, on-campus training session during the summer at SDSU. This four-week session will begin on June 20th and end on July 15th. The curriculum includes:

- ... Organization Development
- ... Policy Development/Implementation
- ... Program Evaluation
- ... State/Federal/Legislative Issues
- ... Grant Proposal Development
- ... Personnel & Fiscal Management
- ... Leadership Development
- ... Consumer/Provider Collaboration
- ... Consumer-Based Organizations and Strategies
- ... Political/Ethical Issues
- ... Collaboration Between Agencies and Partners

The second step commences upon completion of the 9-unit summer program. Trainees return to their home agencies to complete an additional 12 units consisting of an advanced seminar (3 units), special study (3 units) and internship (six units). The projects completed through these three courses are pre-approved under an agreement between the PET-D trainees, their home agency supervisors, and the SDSU faculty. These projects are specifically designed to improve or expand services delivered in the trainees’ agencies and programs.

FELLOWSHIPS

Eight fellowships per year are made available through a training grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). These fellowships pay for graduate tuition and fees for the 21-unit certificate as well as lodging and round trip airfare between the trainee’s home agency and SDSU. In addition, each trainee receives a per diem allowance to partially cover meals while attending the four-week summer program.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applicants who receive the highest priority are those individuals who have earned a masters degree in Rehabilitation with an emphasis in Deafness or a graduate degree in a closely related field. Additionally, applicants who have several years of career experience subsequent to earning the masters degree have

top priority. We focus recruitment on individuals who have five or more years of program administration or coordination experience. In addition to these factors, we recruit individuals who are currently employed in programs and agencies that are actively providing rehabilitation services to individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

We frequently receive inquiries from individuals who do not meet the specific requirements described above. We are definitely interested in further exploring the qualifications of such individuals and giving strong consideration to their admission to the PET-D program. Factors that always influence our admissions decision relate to the applicant’s personal awareness and experience with rehabilitation and disability as well as their leadership attributes.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF PAST PARTICIPANTS

Since the PET-D program’s inception in 1987, over 90% of the participants have entered the program with a masters degree in Rehabilitation/Deafness or a closely related field. The average number of years of post-masters career experience for this group is 12 years. They average six years of administration/program coordination experience. Subsequent to their training, many participants have been either promoted in their present positions, or moved on to other management positions. Additionally, the PET-D Program has been fortunate to recruit excellent trainers who encompass a wealth of experience in the field.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION

There is no specific deadline for application submission. However, we are limited to providing RSA fellowship support to 8 applicants each year. Early application is therefore suggested. If you are interested in attending, or would like more details about our program, please submit a statement of interest and current resume to:

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Director, Deafness Rehabilitation Programs
Department of Administration, Rehabilitation & Post-Secondary Education (ARPE)
San Diego State University
3590 Camino Del Rio North
San Diego, CA 92108-5313

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